

April 2004



MONTANA GEAR UP

GAINING EARLY AWARENESS & READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education / Montana University System



Director's Message: by Sandy Merdinger

"The clock is ticking, the seasons are changing and

our children are waiting." Julie Cajune's words at the Montana Indian Education Association annual conference are still clear in my mind. What a challenge she gave us! There is an urgency in her message that I feel as we move forward in GEAR UP. We are proud that the first group of Montana GEAR UP students is due to graduate this spring. How prepared are they for college? For those planning on attending college this fall, have we given them the tools they need to succeed? That will be one of the topics of the liaisons meeting May 5th in Bozeman. I look forward to our discussion.

We are in the process of awarding the first Montana GEAR UP Pathways scholarships. I've had the opportunity to read all of the applications and am pleased with their quality and am delighted with the wonderful things our students are doing. For all of you who have had a part in the students' success, thank you. Your work has been well worth it!

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What's new with the GEAR UP Counseling Grant:

The Montana School Counselor Association website, is a very inclusive center of information for all educators, not just counselors. From the home page you can check out the links page where you will find easy to navigate pull down menus that include information on a variety of topics including: academic development, associations, career development, college, drugs & alcohol, family, financial aid, mental health, school counseling and more!

Also be sure to check out the "Journal of School Counseling." The JSC is a national, peer reviewed journal and is dedicated to publishing articles that promote the effective practice of school counseling. The mission of the journal is to promote a community of scholarship that includes the thoughts, practices, and research of school counselors and counselor educators from throughout the nation. The journal is comprised of four primary sections: innovative methods, theory and research, professional development, and current issues. Check out this interactive site and be sure not to miss the article comparing GEAR UP schools in Montana to non-GEAR UP schools. You can visit the site at: www.mtschoolcounselor.org

The Montana Indian Education Association (MIEA) Conference was recently held in Missoula on April 1-4, 2004. The conference theme was "Nurturing American Indian Leadership Into The Future." A record number of attendees were registered for the conference. A variety of workshops were held for educators, parents, and students. Several of our co-workers in Helena presented at MIEA, including Ellen Swaney, from OCHE, Steve Meloy from the Board of Public Education as well as Lori Falcon, Lynn Hinch, Al McMillan, Peggy Azure, Becky Bird and Judy Snow from OPI. A highlight of the conference was the naming of the "MIEA High School Student of the Year." Congratulations to CeCe Corcoran, a GEAR UP senior at Rocky Boy High School, who received this year's award.

MIEA Conference Report:

The GEAR UP Spotlight: Kila!!

Kila Quilt & 8th grade trip: Following are excerpts from an article that ran in the Kalispell Daily Interlake. "We are Kila School 7-8th graders. Our 1st semester 7-8th Grade Art Class made this queen-size quilt to help raise funds for our students to be able to go on college visits as part of our GEAR UP program. The Kila students made all of the 'log cabin' squares and put it all together with the help of Kila School Aide, Yvonne Nelson, an avid quilter.



In the photo, clockwise from bottom left: Rebecca Fichter, Tori Davis, Katrina Oakason, Michael Reavis, Derek Conner, Travis Sudan, Cameron Gomez, Gaelyn Moore, Marissa Dennison, Brenaly McKinnon, Jory Mills, Crystal Marsh, Justin Greskowiak, and Kayla Groshelle

Each Year, as part of our involvement with GEAR UP, the 7th graders visit the University of Great Falls and Carroll College in Helena. We combine these college visits with visits to places of historical interest as part of their study of Montana History. Then, in the 8th grade, we take them, by train (an adventure in itself), to the big city of Seattle. Many of our students have never experienced anything outside of Montana. Here we visit the University of Washington and the Art Institute of Seattle, as well as places like the zoo, a ballgame at Safeco Field, museums, the Aquarium, Pacific Science Center.....and we stay in The International Hostel of Seattle, where our students mingle with people from around the world. It is a wonderful educational experience! This will be our 4th year to go to Seattle."



P-20 update: Dual Credit by Arlene Parisot Ed.D, Director of Workforce Development & Two-Year Education

Fast Forward and Running Start are not technical terms for cross-country racing, but are educational options that provide high school students the opportunity to accelerate their education. Dual credit/enrollment – the generic term – allows high school students to take college courses and earn high school and college credit simultaneously. These programs and others are experiencing huge growth and widespread popularity throughout the United States.

Currently, Montana students attending high schools that have agreements with postsecondary institutions are able to access dual credit/enrollment opportunities through a variety of formats. These include, but are not limited to: Tech Prep, Advanced Placement, Running Start, and Fast Forward. Historical precedence for dual credit/enrollment lies in the Tech Prep and Advanced Placement movements and each accelerates learning but through different approaches. Advanced Placement is credit by examination. Tech Prep is essentially a high school class that carries college credit. Conversely, Dual Credit is a college class that carries high school credit. Running Start and Fast Forward have similar structures. An example is the Running Start Agreement between Flathead and Lincoln County High Schools and Flathead Valley Community College that is designed to serve high school juniors and seniors who have the proven academic ability and motivation to face college level challenges and responsibilities. Running Start students pay one-half the normal tuition and full costs of all fees, testing fees, books, materials, transportation and any other regular cost associated with attending college. This opportunity applies to approved classes numbered 100 or above and eligible students are limited to a maximum of nine credits per semester. Credit is awarded upon successful completion of courses.

To increase the availability of these options and streamline the procedures, the Montana Board of Education has requested its P-20 subcommittee to review all dual credit/enrollment offerings in the state with the intent of establishing a more standardized process. The results of this review are expected to be available Fall 2004.

Summertime Professional Development Opportunities:

- Montana GEAR UP School Counseling Institute.** May 6-7, 2004; Holiday Inn, Bozeman, MT
 Last year, the Montana School Counselor Association held a conference that introduced members to the school counseling program model used by the American School Counselor Association. This year MSCA will provide its members with training workshops that focus on the skills and strategies necessary for the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. Montana GEAR UP is sponsoring the institute: School Counseling Programs: Making a Difference - An Institute for Skills and Strategies. The Institute will be held on May 6 and 7 in Bozeman at the Holiday Inn. Registration for this conference is \$60 and includes MSCA membership dues. Although the deadline has passed for state GEAR UP to pay for your registration, please mark your calendars NOW to attend this important event. Registration information is available at: www.mtschoolcounselor.org.
- Montana Behavioral Initiative Summer Institute:** June 14-18, 2004; Montana State University-Bozeman
 This year's summer institute is designed to motivate and equip individuals, schools, and communities to unite in nurturing competent, caring, and responsible children and adolescents with an emphasis on bullying and behavior. We invite you to join us for the summer institute which promises to be one of the best. Participate in a week of professional development that will provide the necessary skills to manage, motivate, discipline, and teach our youth. Mark your calendar today and plan to join us in June. Registration for this conference is \$175. Register after Feb. 1, 2004 at: www.montana.edu/cs/mbi or for info contact Terry Baldus or Gina Newman, 406-522-6028.
- Montana Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development's Summer Institute: "Beyond Compliance: Balancing Learning & Accountability"** June 16-18, 2004; Best Western Great Northern, Helena, MT
 The MASCD Summer institute will feature national speakers on a variety of topics including: *Differentiated Instruction: Principles and Perspectives Helping Struggling Readers Succeed, Measurement in Geometry and Statistics and more.* Registration for this conference is \$175. Register online at: www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/MASCD/Index.html or contact Janet Thomson, Executive Director, MASCD at jannyt@bresnan.net for more information.
- The Teton Institute** June 27-30, 2004; Snow King Resort, Jackson, Wyoming
 When you attend the Teton Institute you'll benefit from state-of-the-art practices taught by recognized leaders in education. You'll walk away inspired, confident, and prepared to meet daily challenges in education. AYP will become a reality as the successes accumulate through the year. Four strands of sessions will be offered and include early childhood, leadership, positive discipline, and literacy. A safer, more productive learning environment is just a registration away! Registration for this conference is \$359. For more information, call 800-547-6747 or go to: www.bettereducator.com and click on "Conferences and Summer Institutes." Montana GEAR UP will contribute payment of only registration fees for GEAR UP teachers and administrators.
- The 2004 Boulder Nuts and Bolts Symposium(TM)** Laugh, Learn, and Share at the **Fifteenth Annual National Symposium for Middle Level Educators** July 22-26, 2004; Omni Interlocken Resort, Boulder, CO
 The entire focus of the Boulder Symposium centers on the practical, proven, day-to-day activities that work in education of the early adolescent child. In addition to the 65-plus sessions at the hotel, one full day will be spent at a middle school in Boulder Valley School District. Here, over 85 sessions will be presented by national consultants, teachers, and administrators from exemplary middle schools in Colorado, other states and foreign countries. Registration for this conference is \$445. For more registration information go to: www.nutsandboltssymposiums.com/boulder.html or contact Walt or Jan Grebing at (303)466-5337 or email grebingjw@att.net. Montana GEAR UP will contribute payment of registration fees only.

Summertime Professional Development: continued from page 3

- **The National GEAR UP Conference: "Cultivating Student Success"** July 25-28, 2004; Washington Hilton & Towers, Washington DC

This is a time to learn about best practices from across the country and a chance to see the big picture of GEAR UP. Last year approximately 1,800 participants took part in this vibrant and energizing gathering. To learn more about the conference, go to www.edpartnerships.org/events and click on NCCEP Annual Conference. Montana GEAR UP would like to sponsor two liaisons, principals, and counselors to attend this year's conference. If you are interested in going and would like Montana GEAR UP to pay, visit the GEAR UP website <http://gearup.montana.edu/> to fill out an application and submit it to Sandy Merdinger by April 22nd. If not selected, you are still encouraged to attend the conference. Registration for this conference is \$550 prior to May 1.

- **The Montana Reading Institute:** August 9-13, 2004; Montana State University-Bozeman

This year we are excited to bring the Montana Reading Institute to educators. The entire week will be devoted to learning more about effective reading instruction. Participants in this institute will benefit from hearing today's most recognized experts in reading and learning about the most effective research-based reading strategies. Educators will be able to take this knowledge and implement immediately into their classroom and school. Participants will also have the opportunity to network with colleagues from across the state in formal and informal settings. This institute will offer research-based sessions for educators in grades K-3, grades 4-9, and special education along with administrators to ensure implementation of effective reading practices that can be successfully implemented school-wide. We look forward to having you join us for this unique opportunity to learn more about effective reading instruction. Registration information for this conference will be available soon by visiting: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/>

- **PLATO Training Days:** There are approximately 7 prepaid PLATO training days left, and they are available on a first come, first serve basis by contacting Celia Smith at (800)869-2058 ext. 2487 or by email at Csmith@plato.com.

The GEAR UP Travel Policy:

Montana GEAR UP encourages school staff to take advantage of these professional development opportunities. It is our policy to provide reimbursement for **Registration Fees, Substitute Teachers, and Lodging** (if the participant's total round-trip exceeds 150 miles) after obtaining prior approval for up to six individuals per school.

Mileage and meals will NOT be reimbursed and should be used for matching if taken from non-federal funding. Schools may use their GEAR UP allocations for travel to professional development that relates to strategies identified in their GEAR UP Implementation Plans.

For professional development offered directly through state GEAR UP (such as GEAR UP's Fall Conference), all travel costs may be reimbursed at state rates with proper documentation.

- Please distribute the promotional materials for this year's summer programs to **all** cohort students and help them prepare any necessary application materials.
- The National GEAR UP Conference is July 25-28 in Washington D.C. Everyone is encouraged to attend, and this year Montana GEAR UP will pay for two administrators, two counselors and two liaisons to attend. If you would like to be considered to attend this year's conference on us, please complete the brief application available on the GEAR UP website and return it to Sandy Merdinger by **April 22nd, 2004**.
- Don't forget to nominate one of your outstanding GEAR UP students to take part in the National Youth Leadership Forum that will be taking place during the national conference. This is an excellent opportunity for youth to participate in a national conference. More information is available on the back page of this newsletter and at www.edpartnerships.org. The deadline to submit applications is **April 30th, 2004**.

April Reminders:

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Summer Programs: What's in Store for 2004:

This summer Montana GEAR UP is sponsoring two summer programs: "2 Cool 2 B School" at Dawson Community College in Glendive and "A World of Opportunities" at Montana Tech in Butte. Both programs are designed to prepare our cohort students for life in college. As transportation has been a barrier for students in the past, each program will be running shuttles to regional locations to assist students getting to and from the campus. Programs are designed to give students a true taste of what college life will be like and include activities like: college orientation, financial aid, academic advising, registration, career decisions, financial awareness, dorm life, mentoring from current college students, hands on college classes and labs, and field trips.

"2 Cool 2 B School" in Glendive will be held June 6 -12, and transportation will be provided along two routes; one from Billings to Glendive, and the other will be from Harlem to Glendive including points in between.

"A World of Opportunities" in Butte will be held June 13 -19, and transportation will be provided along two routes from Kalispell to Butte and the other from Great Falls to Butte including points in between.

Enough promotional and registration materials were provided to liaisons to distribute to every cohort student served by Montana GEAR UP. Please be sure that students receive materials, and are encouraged to participate. These opportunities will provide students an edge when they get to college! Application materials are also available on the GEAR UP website: <http://gearup.montana.edu/>.

Local Summer Program opportunities:

While the goal of this year's state funded summer programs is to give cohort students a taste of college life, due to unexpected carryover from prior years, funds have become available to also offer local summer programs. These funds may be used to provide local academic, non-residential camps for middle school students or credit recovery programs for middle and high school students.

This is not a competitive request for proposals. Any reasonable, relevant and quality program will be funded. Funds cannot be used to fund a summer program already in place. As with all GEAR UP monies, they are to be used to supplement, not supplant other funds and require a dollar for dollar match. As this is late in the year to introduce a new program, the application process to utilize these funds is streamlined and designed to be as easy as possible. Proposals are due to Montana GEAR UP by May 7th, and notification of awards will be made by May 14th. For more information about designing a local summer program, contact your grant manager, Everall Fox or Peter Butler. Application materials are also available on the GEAR UP website at: <http://gearup.montana.edu/>.

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- A block of rooms has been reserved for May 4th at the GranTree Inn in Bozeman for the May 5th Liaison's Meeting. To get the government rate of \$55.00 plus tax, liaisons need to call by April 16, 2004. Please state that you are with GEAR UP when you call. The hotel toll-free number is 1-800-624-5865. The hotel address is 1325 North 7th Avenue. The meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m. so make your plans accordingly.
 - May 1 is the deadline to submit Budget Amendments for FY04.
 - State GEAR UP staff would be more than happy to visit your school on awards day or graduation (schedule permitting) to present awards. Contact them soon if you would like to have them participate.
 - Next month's newsletter will be the last newsletter until next school year. Be sure to submit your articles for the GEAR UP Spotlight to your grant manager by May 7th to be included in the next newsletter.
 - This newsletter is also available on the web! Visit us at: www.gearup.montana.edu

April Reminders: continued from page 4

Montana & National Items of Interest:

Dear GEAR UP Colleague:

In an effort to include student-centered perspectives and the opinions of youth in the education reform debate, the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships and Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. (www.bah.com) once again have joined together to present the 2004 Youth Leadership Summit. The Summit provides opportunities for high school students to participate in activities at the NCCEP/GEAR UP national conference in Washington, DC from July 25-28, 2004. During the summit, the youth leaders will participate in a broad range of activities, including conference plenary sessions, student forums, leadership development training (including a session led by Franklin Covey), and a career awareness workshop. Their experience will culminate in the preparation and oral presentation of a report to be issued during the last plenary session of the conference.

This year, 30 GEAR UP high school students and five alumni from the 2003 Summit will be selected to participate in the 2004 Youth Leadership Summit. The competitive application process requires each youth applicant to submit an essay, formal application, academic transcripts, adult reference letter, and a parental permission form. Detailed Summit information, application guidelines, and the application forms are available on the NCCEP web site (<http://www.edpartnerships.org/events/yls04.cfm>).

For additional information, please contact Allan Jimenez at 202-530-1135 or via e-mail at allan_jimenez@edpartnerships.org. **Please note that the deadline date is April 30, 2004.** Thank you for your nominations and we look forward to seeing you in Washington, DC in July.

Sincerely,

Ranjit Sidhu, Vice President for Corporate and Community Relations

Gear Up Project Directors and Counselors:

The Federal Student Aid (FSA) website, has a new 'FSA for Counselors' component that is an excellent reference for middle school and secondary school counselors. Its features include: the High School Counselor's Handbook, Federal student aid publications with instructions on how to print or order them, videoconferences and scripts and slides for presenting a financial aid night.

The 'FSA for Counselors' is designed for preparing students for college beginning with the junior high/middle school grades. It is developed for use by teachers, parents and students and takes you through the steps of preparing, choosing, applying, funding, attending and repaying.

Students can set up an ID and PIN number to establish a personal account that they can access any number of times, maintaining work done during previous sessions. This site allows the student to: plan for college, research career choices, find the right college (search results tailored to criteria entered by the student), search for scholarships, find financial aid opportunities, apply to colleges on-line, transfer your profile information to the FAFSA, and allowing you to complete it on-line. Check out these super tools at: www.studentaid.ed.gov.

Do you know some one that would like to be added to the newsletter distribution list? Please let us know!

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Montana GEAR UP website
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Montana Guaranteed Student Loan website:
<http://www.mgslp.state.mt.us/>

National GEAR UP website:
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/gearup/index.html>